

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A smoking article comprising a tobacco column, and a wrapper surrounding said tobacco column, said wrapper comprising discrete areas of reduced permeability for improving ignition proclivity characteristics of said smoking article, said reduced permeability areas defining a gradually decreasing permeability profile in a burning direction of said smoking article such that permeability reduction in said reduced permeability areas increases from a minimum zero permeability reduction to a maximum permeability reduction in said burning direction.

2. The smoking article as in claim 1, further comprising an area of sustained maximum permeability reduction following said gradually decreasing permeability profile in said burning direction.

3. The smoking article as in claim 2, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise a substantially ramp-shaped profile.

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4. The smoking article as in claim 1, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability further comprise a gradually increasing permeability profile following said gradually decreasing permeability profile in said burning direction of said smoking article.

5. The smoking article as in claim 4, further comprising an area of sustained maximum permeability reduction between said gradually increasing and gradually decreasing permeability profiles.

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6. The smoking article as in claim 5, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise a substantially ramp-shaped profile with increasing and decreasing ramp section.

7. The smoking article as in claim 1, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise areas treated with a film forming solution.

5 *Sub ay* 8. The smoking article as in claim 7, wherein said treated areas comprise areas treated with a film forming aqueous solution.

9. The smoking article as in claim 7, wherein said treated areas comprise areas treated with a non-aqueous solution of a solvent soluble cellulosic polymer dissolved in a non-aqueous solvent.

9 *10* 10. The smoking article as in claim 9, wherein said solution further comprises a particulate non-reactive filler material.

10 *11* 11. The smoking article as in claim 1, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise an area of maximum reduced permeability of less than 6 ml/min/cm².

Sub as 12. The smoking article as in claim 11, wherein said area of maximum reduced permeability has a length of at least 4 mm.

5 13. The smoking article as in claim 12, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise a plurality of bands disposed along said smoking article, said bands having ramped edges with said area of maximum reduced permeability defined between said ramped edges.

Sub ab 5 14. A smoking article wrapper having discrete areas of reduced permeability for improving ignition proclivity control of a smoking article, said reduced permeability areas defining at least one gradually changing permeability profile in a burning direction which is essentially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said wrapper such that permeability in said changing permeability area changes from zero permeability reduction to a maximum permeability reduction.

15. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 14, wherein said changing permeability profile comprises a gradually decreasing permeability profile in said burning direction such that permeability reduction in said reduced permeability areas increases from zero permeability reduction to a maximum permeability reduction.

14 16. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 13, further comprising an area of sustained maximum permeability reduction following said gradually decreasing permeability profile.

17. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 14, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise cross directional bands having a substantially ramp-shaped profile on at least one side thereof.

18. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 15, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability further comprise a gradually increasing permeability profile following said gradually decreasing permeability profile in said burning direction of said wrapper.

15 19. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 18, further comprising an area of sustained maximum permeability reduction between said gradually increasing and gradually decreasing permeability profiles.

20. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 19, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise a substantially ramp-shaped profile with increasing and decreasing ramp section.

21. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 14, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise areas treated with a film forming solution.

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Sub a9 22. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 21, wherein said treated areas comprise areas treated with a film forming aqueous solution.

23. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 21, wherein said treated areas comprise areas treated with a non-aqueous solution of a solvent soluble cellulosic polymer dissolved in a non-aqueous solvent.

21 24. The smoking article wrapper as in claim *20* ~~23~~, wherein said solution further comprises a particulate non-reactive filler material. *12*

22 25. The smoking article wrapper as in claim *14* ~~24~~, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise an area of maximum reduced permeability of less than 6 ml/min/cm².

Sub a10 26. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 25, wherein said area of maximum reduced permeability has a length of at least 4 mm.

27. The smoking article wrapper as in claim 26, wherein said discrete areas of reduced permeability comprise a plurality of spaced apart bands disposed around said smoking article, said bands having ramped edges with said area of maximum reduced permeability defined between said ramped edges.

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